

ENCOUNTER

A MID-WEEK SERVICE OF PRAYER AND PRESENCE

“Come, Holy Spirit” is Our Theme for August 31-October 5

Week 1: August 31, 2022 – “Spirit of the Ages”

Gathering Music

Welcome

Gathering Hymn: There’s a Spirit in the Air Orientis Partibus



There's a spi - rit in the air, tell - ing Chris - tians ev - ery where:
Lose your shy - ness find your tongue; tell the world what God has done.
May the Spi - rit fill our praise, guide our thoughts and change our ways:



Praise the love that Christ re-vealed, liv - ing, work - ing, in our world.
God in Christ has come to stay. Live to - mor - row's life to - day!
God in Christ has come to stay. Live to - mor - row's life to - day!

Gathering Prayer

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2 and Exodus 14: 15-16, 21-22

Meditation

Reflection and Response

During our time of Reflection and Response, you are invited to engage in a variety of prayer stations. Each week, you may choose a different option or utilize the same one repeatedly. You may also use these practices to center yourself on God and welcome the Holy Spirit anytime during the week. You may take part in the Taizé chant while it is sung.

Hymn during reflection: Veni Sancte Spiritus Jacques Berthier

Concluding prayer and Benediction

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Hymn: Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart

Morecambe

**Spirit of God, descend upon my heart,
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move,
stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
and make me love thee as I ought to love.**

**I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
no sudden rending of the veil of clay,
no angel visitant, no opening skies;
but take the dimness of my soul away.**

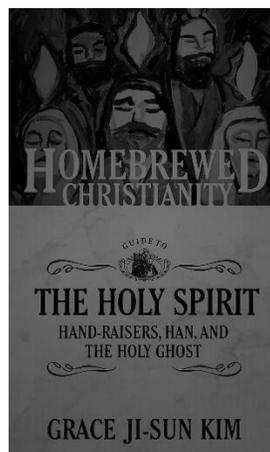
**Hast thou not bid us love thee, God and King?
All, all thine own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind.
I see the cross—there teach my heart to cling,
O let me seek thee, and O let me find.**

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Reverend Brandon Baxter, Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation
Matthew Phelps, Minister of Music

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Our theme for these six weeks, “Come, Holy Spirit,” is based around the work of Grace Ji-Sun Kim and her book *The Holy Spirit: Hand Raisers, Han, and the Holy Ghost*, part of the Homebrewed Christianity series on the Trinity. For further exploration of the Holy Spirit’s place in the history and life of Christians throughout the ages, pick up the book. You may find a copy in our library or you may purchase it from Amazon or your favorite book seller.



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At Home Reflection Prompts

During our time of Reflection and Response, those worshipping in person in the 4th Story Theater will be invited to engage in a variety of prayer stations. Those worshipping at home are invited to choose any of the following options for reflection and response. Each week, you may choose a different option or utilize the same one repeatedly. You may also use these practices to center yourself on God and welcome the Holy Spirit anytime during the week.

Option 1: Breath Prayer

Ruach, one of the Hebrew words for breath, can be translated as Spirit. This type of prayer reminds us of the ways God continually breathes life into our souls. Choose a simple word or phrase to help focus your attention on God. This might be a simple phrase from our Scripture for the evening, a simple one sentence blessing you know, or even just two words that God has given you. Sit or lie comfortably, allowing your breathing to be natural. As you breathe in, focus on the first word or first part of the phrase. Then as you breathe out, focus on the second word or second part of the phrase. Repeat continually. Two examples:

Inhale: Spirit of life

Inhale: Peace

Exhale: fill my soul.

Exhale: Love

Option 2: Holy Fire, Light of the World

Find a candle in your home, office, or wherever you are worshipping. Light the candle. Gaze at its flame. Watch it dance and flicker. Feel its warmth and radiance. As you gaze into the fire, contemplate the ways that you have seen the light of Christ shine in your life this week. Remember the large and small ways that you have seen the Spirit of God present and moving in your life; in the smile of a child or grandchild, in a chat with a friend, in a good meal, on a beautiful hike, etc. Ponder these things, give thanks to God for being with you in those moments, and pray to be open to the presence of God's Spirit in the coming week.

Option 3: Postures of Presence

Throughout the centuries, Christians have recognized the power of bodily posture to help us connect to the Spirit of God. As we seek to encounter God's in-dwelling presence, one of the most common ways to open our bodies and souls to the spirit has been to raise our hands in praise (in a V, similar to a touchdown call in football). This pose is called the orans. It can be seen in some of the earliest of depictions of Christian worship and people still raise their hands in praise to this day. Raise your hands in praise. Close your eyes and breathe calmly. Feel the presence of God as you open yourself to the Spirit. Offer your prayers, be they joyous praises or heartfelt laments. Give it to God, and let God fill your body and soul with love and grace. If you are uncomfortable raising your arms in praise, an alternative can be to place your hands together in front of you, palms up and open. Give what you need to give to God and expect to receive God's spirit in return.

Option 4: Spirit Words, Spirit Images

Find some blank paper and some pens, pencils, markers, or colored pencils. Spend a moment breathing deeply, asking for God's Spirit to speak to you. As you are ready, begin to write or draw whatever comes to your heart or mind. There is no right or wrong here. Simply allow yourself to be guided by the Spirit. Once you have written and/or drawn whatever God has placed on your heart, spend time meditating on these words and images. Give thanks for what God has revealed to you.